January Ambassador of the Month and Newest Community Champion – SpyShadow!

Community Miss AshesX Jan 5, 2021

The new year is here, and we're all waiting to see what 2021 has in store for us! Here at the Xbox Ambassadors program, this change brings us into Season 21 and that means it's time we announce January's Ambassador of the Month and the newest XA Community Champion, SpyShadow!

Ever since SpyShadow fell in love with gaming, he made it a point to give back to the community. He would post on community forums and help test features on the newer consoles and games when he could. This eventually led him to the Xbox Ambassadors community and he immediately began to connect with other like-minded Ambassadors while participating in the program's activities involving the XA Club, Twitter, and the Forums.

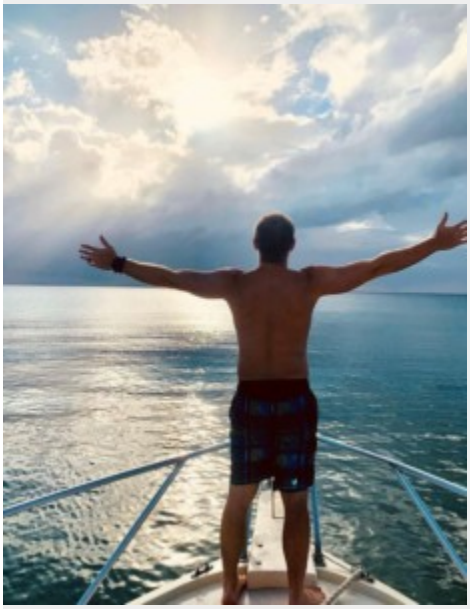
"The close friends I have made online and even had the opportunity to meet up with in real life at conventions really solidify my bonds with the Ambassador program. The positive open community is what makes me want to stay!"

SpyShadow helped moderate the XA Club which included Ambassadors and non-Ambassadors making up over 500k members. With the changes to the program, he stays involved through his online and in-person interactions with the community which includes Discord, play dates, forum prompts, and meet-ups. To him, community is about being active, available, and understanding in all your interactions. You can find SpyShadow on Twitter and Twitch!

Before creating his own content, SpyShadow began as a viewer on Mixer watching a good friend and former Mixer partner, NightSky. A few months after joining his community, they encouraged him to branch out and stream his own content. After giving it a go, he realized how passionate he was interacting with people live while playing games. His community grew to include many people of all ages, some being very young. Noticing that many content creators choose to promote mature content and worried that there

weren’t a lot of places for younger audiences, he branded his community on positive and inclusive content. As long as everyone showed respect, no one would be turned away or blocked from his content.

“This successfully took off on Mixer, and years later I am still providing this content on Twitch. My direct messages stay open, and I take the time to interact and listen to those who watch my channel. They are more than a number to me, they have become family!”



Hear more from SpyShadow below:

You were involved in a panel last year for MomoCon. Tell us a bit about it!

This was by far one of my coolest experiences as an Xbox Ambassador and content creator that was made possible by the connections I have made through this program. I was asked by a good friend, SecretAsian29, if I would be interested in interviewing another ambassador, SightlessKombat, on the importance of accessibility as a gamer without sight. It was such a pleasure to work with both on this project, and it was great getting to know Kombat on a more personal level. His positive attitude, passion for gaming, and amazing insights challenged me to understand the world of gaming from a different perspective. To be able to join in sharing his ideas live by webcam to the MomoCon audience was humbling. Concepts like what we discussed about the importance of making gaming accessible to those without sight align so well with the mantra “Gaming is for Everyone!”, something I have adapted as my own personal vision.

Weeks following the event brought questions and comments that were shared with us that excited me. Developers and Game Studios were understanding the importance and looking to adapt their creations to provide accessibility options to different people. It gave me hope and vision that further discussions and panels are important to bringing people together to collaborate on new ways to provide gaming to everyone. This gave me an opportunity to join my voice with others on a live broadcast and promote positive inclusive content. I am very grateful to have been a part of the MomoCon panel.

(event occurred in 2020)

How did gaming become one of your passions?

Gaming became a passion of mine at a very young age. My father was really into the new computers way back when and brought home every once in a while, a game on a floppy disk. He would sit there and play it with me, and this developed into a regular occurrence as CD-ROMs were introduced. King's Quest was our favorite series! We would sit there and become engrossed in the story together.

Later down the road my best friend in the neighborhood got the original Xbox with Halo: Combat Evolved. We played hours of couch multiplayer with him and his older brother (complete with shouts of "You are screen peeking!" when we were eliminated). Halo made me fall in love with the Xbox and I finally purchased one for my own. Ever since, console gaming on the Xbox has been a passion of mine. I recently found my original Xbox

tucked away in my parents closet and the nostalgic memories it brings back are sweet.

What does a healthy community look like to you and what do you do to contribute to that vision?

A healthy community to me is a safe open place for everyone to be themselves. It gives anyone the opportunity to enjoy social interaction in whatever degree they feel comfortable with. We live in one of the most amazing times for the Xbox platform. In a time when a pandemic has limited social interactions due to physical constraints, online community is poised to forge the bond between people all over the world. This breaks down walls that keep people isolated, alone, and unwanted. Right now I am contributing to that vision through my livestreaming channel on Twitch and my online interactions through social media. By providing an open forum with a few simple rules that allows people to not be judged by their beliefs, feelings, and thoughts; I help them heal through free expression and social connections.

How do you think online communities positively impact the lives of gamers?

I have recently seen online communities positively impact gamers more than ever before. In a world that encourages and forces people to feel isolated (for both right and wrong reasons) it is even more critical to provide people with

a social outlet. People are not meant to go it alone, and anyone who has ever felt that loneliness can attest to this truth. Gaming also is so much more than you and the game you are playing. Recently I have seen in the Xbox Ambassadors Discord deep discussions about single player games that are being spotlighted as part of the Xbox Community Game Club. We love the stories that are portrayed in the games we play, and the challenging thoughts it invokes within us. We feel the need to share these experiences with others, and an online community gives us that opportunity. Online communities help us get outside ourselves, experience new exciting perspectives, and enjoy the world around us!

What other things outside of gaming are you involved in?

I am currently a husband to a wonderful wife and soon-to-be dad! (She is expecting in June 2021). Family is very important to me, and you will often see this in my online socials. They come first and this even includes my dog, Boh, a puggle. We adventure together as a family and at a moment's notice like to halt the mundane and take a trip across the states together. This is usually centered around a national park. A more recent adventure took us to the peaks of Glacier National Park, a positively breathtaking experience I would recommend to anyone! Besides that I am an avid reader, a book always holds a wealth of knowledge and wisdom that is just waiting to be consumed. It lets my imagination run wild!

Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?

I am a hugely approachable person, I think it would do a disservice to the community if I didn't offer a chance to connect with me if you wish. Obviously life keeps me pretty busy so I don't always answer promptly but I

am active on most social platforms for a reason, to help others. I have had conversations with gamers that are too personal to share but the result has been encouraging and beneficial in their life. This is simply because they needed a ear to listen and a social connection to lean on.

What message do you have for the XA community?

My message is simple: Think of others. It’s easy to get too wrapped up in your own life, own desires, own goals, that you miss the person on the other end of the internet that might just need a caring word or a listening ear. You would be surprised at how much joy and happiness you get back just by keeping other’s feelings in mind. Step out of a comfort zone, reach out to someone you are thinking about right now and offer a friendship to them. We are all in this together and remember, Gaming is truly for everyone!